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Biography



**The Short Sketch of the Life of**  
**SIR EBRAHIM H. JAFFER OF POONA.**  
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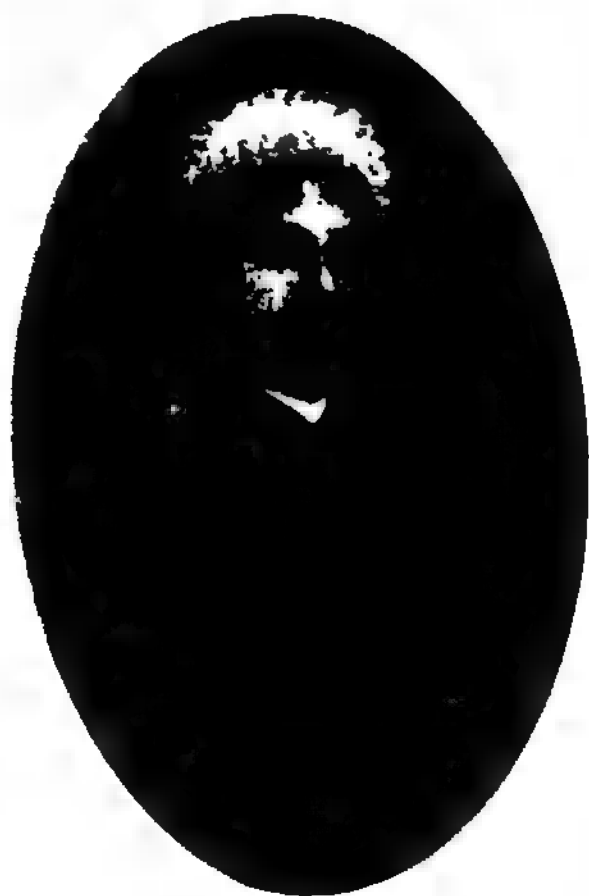


**Published by—Munshi Abdus Subhan Rajab**  
**2015 E. Gaffarbeg Street, Camp Poona.**

**Printed by—J. P. Bangale, at the**  
**Loyal Printing Press, 449 Raviwar Peth,**  
**Poona City.**







The advancement of Muslim education has been the dominant theme in Sir Haroon's public life. He has been untiring in his efforts, both inside and outside the Provincial and Imperial Legislative Councils, in pressing upon the attention of the authorities and of the public bodies concerned, the claims and needs of his community with due regard to the rights of all other communities. These efforts, as his biography shows, have produced a rich harvest.

Sir Haroon's organizing power as General Secretary of the Presidency Muslim Conference has been well and truly again to his credit in the annual sessions of the Conference. It is generally acknowledged that the result of the Conferences has been an appreciable increase in the number of Muslim pupils in the institutions of the Presidency.

The biography is an inspiring record of Sir Haroon Jaffer's varied activities, which cover a wide field including the Cutchi Memon Bill, Cantonment grievances, local self-government, election malpractices, bank legislation, indigenous industries, factory labour, Haj hardships, censorship and

M. ABBAS ALI BAIG.

# The Bahadur Ebrahim Haroon

1.

## Preparing for

When some  historian writes a history   growth  education in India, one name which will shine as  in the firmament is that of Sir Ebrahim Haroon Jaffer  Poona, who, by dint of patience and  and enthusiasm, has done  solid work for  Muslim   past quarter of a century. Few  in India   a record of sacrifice and service, & few men  lived  their efforts rewarded in so definite a  not merely by His Majesty  King-Emperor, but also by  remarkable progress in every line of activity which he undertook. If he  his hand to the advancement  Muslim education, then Muslim education advanced in  uncertain manner; if he decided to organise Muslim Educational Conferences, then the idea grew until several districts in the Presidency now hold such a conference every ; if  worked for the good of the residents in cantonments, then a number of changes for the better  sooner  later announced; if he undertook to improve the conditions under which the Haj pilgrims travelled to Mecca, then those pilgrims found ample cause to bless his ;  realised that his fellow Cutchi Memons  in need of having their grievances redressed, then the Government were soon convinced that  early redress  necessary; if  made up his mind that  boys  a public school, then within a  of years a Governor of Bombay laid  foundation   Panchgani;  entered political life  further the cause  India, then  eagle eye and  mind  exposed   points and supported  strong points of the constitutional system;  short, whatever  turned  hand  mind to   finality before  would let the matter drop. His patience and persistency in   have  proverbial  political circles,  it  evident

enabled him also to acquire landed property in Poona.

It must be imagined that this worthy man's attention and was devoted to his own personal affairs. From it; he was active in the field of public affairs as he was within the walls of his own Social service, then a very commodity in the Presidency as as ordinary citizens were concerned, became a hobby, and manifested itself along both educational and medical lines. As might be expected a sudden cut short could hardly bring to fruition any plan at improving education amongst Muslims, especially as at that time educational reform was practically unknown; and so it was left for the work he nobly started and carried on by his son. But his sacrifice and energy when Poona was thrown into confusion at the first serious epidemic of plague singled him out as an organiser and public worker, and so it is to say that of all the of usefulness and service which stand to Mr. Jaffer Jussuff the establishment of a plague hospital stands prominent.

Nor must it be forgotten that in those early days, it was no simple matter to establish such an institution. The were decidedly antagonistic to the novel idea of submitting a hospital whilst the quarantine segregation camps speedily hardened hearts against the efforts of the authorities to the tide of the deadly plague. And so as a missionary of quarantine, segregation, hospital and the splendid citizen, and for weeks took his life in his hands as he moved about among the people urging them to reason and to make some effort to save their lives. His efforts were to a great measure successful as far as the people were concerned, but they proved fatal to himself, for while he was throwing his whole energy and time





has thus [redacted] good fortune [redacted] the fruit [redacted] his labours with others who [redacted] in greater need.

Always at the head of his class, both [redacted] the Poona Camp Government School and the Poona High School, [redacted] gave promise of a useful and marked future, and many times his teachers gave frank utterance of their conviction [redacted] in the young student there was a future leader of [redacted] country, although it is doubtful whether [redacted] these [redacted] who [redacted] into such close touch with him realised [redacted] to how exalted a position [redacted] would rise, and he knighted in his prime [redacted] Emperor's reward of his services for Muslim education and other signal services in India. Nevertheless [redacted] all who knew him [redacted] not [redacted] whit surprised when the results of the 1899 matriculation examination [redacted] published to find that their young friend had passed with distinction, being the first member of Kutchi-Memon community to matriculate, and the second in the whole of [redacted] Presidency.

But [redacted] has [redacted] often been the case in the life of Sir Ebrahim Haroon Jaffer, this particular joy and honour was made bitter with sadness and disappointment, [redacted] immediately before the examination [redacted] reached him he [redacted] called [redacted] be chief [redacted] [redacted] the funeral of his [redacted] who had [redacted] nobly laid down his useful [redacted] for the ignorant [redacted] suffering [redacted] of Poona and who had given the lead to the idea that in time of adversity [redacted] needs of humanity [redacted] give place [redacted] the whims [redacted] a community. And from [redacted] life of service [redacted] which [redacted] so marked the career of Sir Ebrahim, it [redacted] that [redacted] made a [redacted] [redacted] the grave of his [redacted] that [redacted] would carry [redacted] the work [redacted] endeavour [redacted] improve the lot [redacted] [redacted] backward [redacted] who cared [redacted] for education because they knew not of [redacted] advantages.

21. But [redacted] was [redacted] [redacted] graveside [redacted] [redacted] also [redacted] he was confronted with [redacted] [redacted] most serious problems of

■ whole ■■■■. The business which ■■■■ been left  
 ■ trust for the family ■■■■ by this time ■ very ex-  
 tensive ■■■■ with wide operations in many branches  
 of commercialism : but it ■■■■ at that time ■■■■ was  
 financially complicate. Without his hand ■ the helm  
 to steer it, there seemed very probability that it would be  
 driven ■ to the rocks of disaster, and hence his friends  
 advised him to devote his entire time to saving the  
 business. But on the other hand the young man had  
 made up his mind during his youth that he could only  
 give of his best and be of the greatest use to his country  
 if he ■■■■ educated, and so he was determined to pursue  
 his studies to the end of the course he had mapped out  
 ■■■■ himself. To take full charge of the business would  
 doubtless ■■■■ that his life ambition would have to be  
 shelved and that he would have to be content with having  
 made for himself ■ mark in the world as ■ successful  
 man of commerce, or even a merchant prince. After  
 much careful thought, the ambition to ■■■■ others pre-  
 dominated over a desire to make friends by joining the  
 Deccan College to finish off his education under that  
 renowned scholar Dr. Selby.

### THE CALL OF NATURE

Events, however, showed that he could not do the  
 impossible. With that keenness and enthusiasm of youth,  
 which is ■■■■ now ■ strong ■ ever it was, the young  
 man endeavoured ■ be a student at the Deccan College  
 ■■■■ the manager of his firm at the ■■■■ time, but ■■■■  
 tually he had to give up education and devote all ■■■■  
 attention ■ the firm. Family troubles also made his ■■■■ far  
 from easy, and he had ■ spend much time and ■■■■ in  
 endeavouring to conciliate ■■■■ different factions which  
 made themselves apparent amongst his relatives. This  
 meant ■■■■ for the next seven years ■■■■ of Mr Ebrahim  
 Haroon Jaffer's time had ■■■■ be entirely devoted to his

family interests, although with his untiring will and tireless energy he managed to find an occasional hour in which to carry on some of his philanthropic and educational reforms which he and his father had instituted. These many years, however, were by no means wasted, even from the view point of his public work, for in this period the business was so established and systematised and financed that from then until now the ardent worker found himself with considerable leisure in which to carry out his ambitious plans for the improvement of his country.

The time was now set for real action. Encouraged by his father's example; inspired by his father's sacrifice, undaunted by a hundred obstacles, prepared by a good education, enriched by a period of foreign travel and experience, tested by a host of private troubles, and called by a great need of his people, Mr. Ebrahim felt that his time had come for him to do something worth while and worthy of his life's ambition. He accordingly plunged into public life in real earnest, and within a comparatively short time the municipal administration of Poona, the Bombay Council, and the Imperial Council heard his ringing voice and felt the weight of his experience. His work in each of these directions formed the subject of different chapters of his biography, mention of which being made here merely to show that from the start his work was by no means one-sided and that he intended to give of his time and energy and experience to all communities. He was one of those few Muslims who took any live interest in politics in the pre-reform days, and his work then made of him a valuable worker when India received a fuller measure of self-administration through the Reforms. His speech in the Imperial Legislative Council on the occasion of His Majesty the King-Emperor's proclamation of the Reforms stood out, not only as the creed of a loyalist and the gospel of a

stitutionalist, but also as a dignified member of a Muslim and an Indian what was expected of His Majesty's Government. Of all the speeches made on this occasion, Mr. Jaffer's stands out, for conciseness, plainness and dignity, as one to be preserved, both as a statement of his past views and a promise of his future co-operation. He said:

"We in this country have always hailed with the highest reverence and cherished with the deepest loyalty the utterances and pronouncements of the British Sovereign with respect to the policy of His Majesty's Government in connection with the progress and status of the people of India. With their traditional attachment to the Throne the Indian people have combined a reasoned conviction about the beneficence of their Sovereign, whose words have ever worked a charm upon the minds of all classes and creeds in this country .

"The gracious proclamation of His Majesty the King Emperor has a still greater significance (than the Charter of 1858), and will occupy a lasting place in the hearts of His Majesty's loyal subjects. That proclamation, coming as it does, at a momentous stage in the history of this ancient land, breathes the spirit of generous appreciation for the aspirations of the Indian people, and is instinct with sentiments of Imperial goodwill and benevolence, and is full of inspiration for officials and non-officials who have loyally and whole-heartedly to carry out the policy laid down for their guidance . . . The Royal Proclamation heralds a new era, a new epoch in the development of India's destinies, and very opportunely indicates the lines along which officials and Indians must work if that epoch is to bring progress and happiness to the country. Opinions may differ as to the length of time which the Reform Act will take to open the path of constitutional freedom and of elevation to national status. But there

"a general agreement that the British Government constitute a substantial advance and are determined to give India full responsible Government and an equal voice in the Empire at an early date . . . . On behalf of the people, and especially of the Mohammedan community, whom I have the honour to represent in this Council, I beg to give a humble but strong assurance that the Royal Proclamation has met with a loyal and hearty response, and I trust similar sentiments will prevail on the Indian side."

But perhaps more attention should now be called to the great problem which first faced Sir Ebrahim Jaffer, namely, the extension of education among the Mohammedans, and which, more than anything else he has made his life-work with conspicuous success. That, therefore, will form the subject of our next section.

## *Part II.*

### **THE BATTLE AGAINST ILLITERACY.**

From his early days of youth, Mr. Ebrahim Jaffer has been with an ambition and a resolve to uplift and ameliorate the condition of his co-religionists who were backward in education, although at that time his was almost a lone voice crying in the wilderness. There were only half a dozen Muslims in the Presidency who recognised that the chief plank in any platform of progress was Education, and all of these were prepared to spend their time in this much-needed and praiseworthy service. But, almost single-handed, Mr. Jaffer has been about putting these convictions into practice, and slowly but surely opened up new avenues towards the goal. His own convictions were strengthened beyond any shaking when he read of the lives and views of such Indian figures as Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and other eminent Muslims who held the view that the salvation of

the country lay in education, and with his whole heart and soul threw himself into a cause than which no better could have been selected.

The nucleus round which he could work had already been established by his father, in whose life time the foundation of the Islamia school building had been laid. But when Mr. Ebrahim Jaffer walked into the stage of action, the school was in its infancy, although its endowment was anything but satisfactory or definite. Within a comparatively short period the Islamia School building became recognised as a real Memorial to Khan Bahadur Jaffer Jussuff, and the good work commenced by him is still being carried on and is looked upon with pride and gratefulness by all the Moslems of Poona and the district. The School was opened on September 10th, 1907 by His Excellency, Sir John Muir Mackenzie, Acting Governor of Bombay, and quickly improved in enrolment and attendance. When Lord Sydenham inspected the School less than three years later he said: "It is most encouraging that in two years the pupils have risen from 10 to 322." And from that day to this the School has made an excellent record for itself, and many of the students who have completed their education within its walls have made their mark in the world of citizenship.

It is also interesting to note that even in those early days of educational reform, Mr. Ebrahim Jaffer manifested his wide outlook and his liberal views by advocating mass education, which he has always been a staunch supporter, and he made liberal provision in the Islamia school for girls, many of whom have taken advantage of the opportunity during the past twenty years.

### MASS EDUCATION.

But the vision of Mr. Jaffer was too great to cause him to bottle up his energies in purely parochial

activities, and so he decided to attack the great problem of mass education. Just at that time, by a singularly happy coincidence, the late Nawab Zaidi Nasrulla Khan initiated the scheme of a general provincial body to further the interests of the Muslim community. Quick to see the great possibilities of such a scheme, Mr. Ebrahim Jaffer threw himself into organization of what was to become a tremendously useful and influential Bombay Presidency Muslim Educational Conference, and right from the start a campaign of propaganda in favour of Muslim education began its mighty work. Through the energy and enthusiasm of Mr. Jaffer, who accepted the onerous and arduous office of general secretary of the Conference, sessions were convened at different centres of the Presidency, particularly in those areas where the Mohammedans were admittedly backward in educational matters. Poona was the venue of a number of sessions, of which that held in 1903 stands out; whilst to stir up his co-religionists in the southern division, a most important session of the Conference was held at Dharwar, which gave a new turn to educational reform in that area and set on foot a move which is still to be seen and the results of which are to-day visible in the number of public schools from the southern division Moslems who are doing excellent work at the present time.

His vision was also manifested in another way in connection with these conferences. With a view to facilitating the interchange of ideas between officials and non-officials and to break down the barriers which by some had been erected to hamper educational progress when initiated by sources other than those of the Government, Mr. Ebrahim Jaffer instituted the "At Home" sessions of the Conference, in which the Governor of Bombay and all leading members and

of the Government were invariably invited. This social function not only resulted in certain petty jealousies amongst delegates being explained away but also provided a meeting ground where, in an unofficial atmosphere of freedom and friendliness, important questions relating to the subjects discussed in the Conference could be thrashed over the tea-cups. It is no secret to say that during these happy "At Homes" more knotty problems were solved and more contentious resolutions smoothed down than could ever have been decided in the formal sessions of the conference meetings. Many a tale of remarkable compromise and excellent could be told of these social gatherings, and if only officialdom could speak and relate its confessions, it is an exaggeration to say that even Governors and Members of Council would admit that their attendance at the conference "At Homes" was as educative as it was pleasant and the deciding factor in many a scheme of Government assistance to Moslem educational institutions. In these days we are apt to take such gatherings for granted and as the usual things, but when Mr Ebrahim Jaffer introduced the pian the "bureaucracy" was in full swing, and to a high Government official was obtained only by those who knew the magic "Open Sesame" to the Secretariat doors.

### EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCES.

His interest in the All-India field was especially marked by his activities in the 1913 session at Surat, and the 1919 session at Kairpur in Sind, culminating in his being selected as President of the All-India Moslem Educational Conference at Amrohi in 1920. This session was held at a time the N. C. O. movement was at its zenith, and when people who were striving for the stability of the country for responsible Government had a very hard row to hoe. At this time particularly general



discipline ■■■ authority were being undermined and schools ■■■ colleges were either being emptied ■■ were turned ■■■ hotbeds ■■ sedition and dissension. No more difficult ■■■ could have confronted a President who was ■ public man; yet here the Hon. Mr. E. H. Jaffer made ■ speech which undoubtedly ■■■ the finest of his career. In his presidential address he demonstrated ■■■ full how ■■ spoken ■■ could be even in face of the prospects of an unyielding boycott, and ■■ spared neither ■■■ own community nor the leaders of the N. C. O. Movement. Not that his speech ■■■ dogmatic, didactic ■■ boastful, far from it. Indeed, he distinctly said, "This is not the time when you ■■ rely ■■ the advice and guidance of a single individual. ■■■ whole system of our education is faced with destruction and it should be our united aim to find ■■■ ■■■ this grave calamity." Yet he felt it ■■■ his duty ■■ convince the representatives of the Muslim Community at the conference, ■■ well ■■ the outside public, that the system of education then existing, though imperfect, ■■■ share of usefulness, and that until they themselves could provide an infinitely better substitute, ■■ ■■■ their duty to make the best of what they had. At such a time a lesser man would have hedged by making his speech a chain of meaningless platitudes; but not so the Poona stalwart ■■ education. ■■■ speech was ■■ exceptionally keen and well reasoned summary of the situation and the only means ■■ solving the great problems with which they ■■■ faced; and ■■ ■■ presented such an excellent picture of ■■■ Hon. Mr. Jaffer's foresight, frankness, and ■■■ certain paragraphs ■■■ of necessity form a part of this biography.

Without frills the President jumped ■■ once into his subject in ■■■ very first ■■■ which rang out like a ■■■ call of warning ■■■ duty:—"The present ■■■ of ■■■ All-Indian Muhammadan Educational

Conference is being held at a critical period of our national existence, when ■■■■ and almost revolutionary changes ■■ taking place in the country, and conditions are changing with such ■ kakisoscopic rapidity that one can hardly guess the ultimate end. ■■ the ■■ hand there is a reform scheme which is being hailed by a section of the people ■ a harbinger of an ■ of administrative reform, and ■ the other hand ■ country is seething with discontent and the alluring ideal of Swaraj ■ being dangled before the eyes of the people who are led to believe that non-co-operation will usher in ■■■ EL Dorado. The result is that our intense absorption in politics has made us entirely indifferent to questions of vital importance to our national well-being. This indifference has extended even to education which has done so much to raise our ideals of life, which has inspired every healthy movement amongst us and ■ which alone we can trace our recent awakening and the new-born desires for political freedom.

"But indifference apart, there is yet another obstacle in the path of education which we have to overcome. The promoters of the non-co-operation movement, ■ you all know, have included the destruction of the present system of education in their programme, and this has added immensely to our difficulties, ■ much so that I doubt if we ■■ easily overcome them."

He then passed ■ to a few general comments ■ the Khilafat question, to give the results of ■ x-ray examination of ■ devastating Non-co-operation Movement:—"The apostles of Non-co-operation ■ advising students ■ boycott all institutions, maintained ■ affed by government, ■ the plea ■■ this action ■ their part ■ required by their religion. I am not in a position ■ say anything about ■ religious aspect of the case, but I wonder why the ■■■■■ have been indifferent to ■■

question so long? Religious ~~and~~ apart how-  
 ever every ~~man~~ can ~~feel~~ that a ~~boycott~~  
 of ~~educational~~ institutions will spell disaster for the nation  
 and specially ~~the~~ ~~Muslims~~. This is the ~~reason~~ why I  
 hesitate to believe that ~~this~~ ~~is~~ is justified on religious  
 grounds in the absence of an authoritative decision of the  
 ULEMA. In any case ~~this~~ is a question which ~~must~~ be  
 shelved, but ~~should~~ be solved in a satisfactory manner  
 so ~~that~~ the people may have a clear lead in the ~~future~~.

"There are three parties in the country at present  
 with regard to non-co-operation. The first regards it as  
 the weapon by which Swaraj can be attained, the second  
 exhorts all Moslems to follow it as a religious duty, while  
 there is a third party consisting of men of moderate views  
 who are in search of a via Media but have not yet  
 succeeded in finding their goal."

He lamented that up to that time the ULEMA had  
 not spoken with a clear united voice on the religious  
 aspect of the revolt against the government system of  
 education, and then went on to declare in the most  
 unequivocal of language his views "as a member of the  
 Moderate Party":-

"I am of the opinion that every man should  
 co-operate with Government, but by co-operation I do  
 of course, mean that we should be at the beck and call of  
 the officials or try to secure their good-will. Any  
 for such action on our part would neither be beneficial to  
 Government nor to the Community. I am therefore con-  
 strained to say that the whole country has been deeply stirred  
 by the grievous turn taken by the Khilafat question and  
 by the heart-rending events in the Punjab. Would that  
 we could forget them, but more exhortation of res-  
 ponsible officials to forgive and forget can have little  
 soothing effect, for our wounded hearts require a healing

balm, lest the festering sore develop and empty words exasperate the people still further.

"I am as opposed to the existing discontent in the country and the confidence of the people in us as giving up of education as a part of co-operation. It is incumbent on Government to redress the wrongs of the Punjab and have the Turkish Treaty revised, it is the bounden duty of a Government to respect the feelings of the people it governs and to have due regard for their rights. This change of front on the part of Government will be welcomed throughout the country and will greatly help in restoring confidence, since repressive measures can be beneficial either to Government or the people. The moderates who are prepared to co-operate with Government will rally round its banner if they were of a changed angle of vision. This is the only way in which the country can be purified, and to my thinking it would be advisable to remove the cause of the present discontent than to insist on people forgiving and forgetting. It might be urged that a radical change of policy would be looked on as a sign of weakness. But this I think is absolutely contrary to fact, as such a change will rather evoke feelings of gratitude throughout the country. People who advise Government to rule by force underestimate the depth of popular feeling on the one hand and on the other to ruin Government by misleading it."

The next portion of his address demonstrated not only his scholarship but his political sagacity and is worth quoting at length as an example of the subject matter of presidential addresses:—

"You are well aware that the Muslim began long before 1857, the institution of a thousand years of sovereignty are to kill them they are

still under the delusion that their prestige was unimpaired: The events of 1857 however made a clean sweep of the last vestiges of their political power by the extinction of the Moghul Empire, although long before that the inroads of the Mahomedans and others had reduced Moslem power to a mere shadow and the growing power of the English was sounding its death-knell. The loss of Empire is the forerunner of grave calamity to many nations and, in the case of the Mohamedans, the result was that their powerful families were reduced to poverty. The decline of learning and of arts among the Moslems was a natural corollary of these events, for their progress depends upon the patronage of Government; when this support is withdrawn their decline is sure and certain. The wages of sin is death. Our present degraded condition and the loss of our empire are due to the fact that we became deficient in the qualities for sovereign people. God himself says that He entrusts only those with the Government of the world who are qualified to govern it. As the loss of empire was due to their own faults it was their duty to bear their self-inflicted calamities with patience and to set their house in order, so that they could acquire as much political power as was possible under an alien government. This they could only do by learning the arts and sciences of the dominant people. But they were blinded by passion and prejudice and they had also a grievance against the English as the supposed author of their ruin. They could hardly see that the English were an alien people who had no prejudices against them and that they could be expected to treat justly with the various people of India, as they had nothing in common with them. It is, however, a fact that the Moslems neglected English education in the early days of British rule in India and they are still suffering as a result of their initial blunder. It is noteworthy in this connection that the Moslems in spite of their religious prejudices

caste restrictions in India took up the study of Western arts and sciences and even began to travel to Europe. This is very strange in view of their religious prohibitions which prohibits foreign travel, and was probably their first attempt after a long time to renew their relations with the outside world. But there were still prejudices against foreign travel and the acquisition of learning. A memorial signed by many persons in Government in 1835 praying that not a single penny should be spent on Western Education as it would make the people Christians."

Under such foreboding conditions as these it is not surprising that the speaker, with a touch of common sense born of experience, declared: "It is not an easy task to make a people appreciate the blessings of education," and he then announced a prophecy which has been fulfilled in the following:—

"I assure you that this movement will end in destroying all Moslem institutions and we shall rue the day we took part in it. It will be as injurious to our interests as our prejudice against English education was in the early days of British rule, and subsequent generations will lay on us the blame for disregarding the interests of our youth and wrecking the only means by which they might have hoped to work out their political salvation."

Against the evil consequences of participation in this suicidal movement the prophet has been fighting ever since he gave the warning, and has been appealing to his Community to reform their social institutions and to the Government advocating a general acceptance of the principles of national education. Verily, Moslems have lived to "see the day they fostered and encouraged the N. C. O. Movement; and many who laughed at the Hon. Mr. Jinnah's prophecy in 1931 are now following the lead he has given towards ameliorating the effects of those

misguided steps towards the supposed goal of Swaraj. The warning given in those days of 1920 by the Hon. Mr. Jaffer, urging his co-religionists to seal the fate of their young men by grasping something which was illusory, is undoubtedly one of the greatest actions in his career and definitely sealed his reputation as a far seeing and far-seeing man.

But while he was thus acting as a wise leader in his community at large, this indefatigable man was doing great things inside the Legislature, and his record in the realm of educational advancement in India, the Bombay and Imperial Councils before the reform is equalled by few. Immediately after resolution moved and supported by him in the local council was given effect by Government. As far back as 1913 he gave whole-hearted support to the Hon. V. J. Patel's resolution in advocating an early beginning in the direction of free and compulsory elementary education, and although he was not backward in pointing out the difficulties, his speech was decidedly constructive.

Another outstanding resolution was that moved in 1917 asking for a larger proportion of Scholarships to be ear-marked for Mohamedan students, and after accepting it, Government speedily gave practical effect to it, whilst Mr. Jaffer also saw to it that Government did not go to sleep over the cultivation of the interest from the Mohamed Yussuff's donation of eight lakhs for Scholarships for Mohamedan Students. He also kept a watchful eye on the progress of Urdu training Colleges and the enlargement of their scope, and it was through him that additional training colleges were started in Poona in 1918. Then again year after year in each Budget presentation he brought forward the claims of his community for larger assistance and pressed so persistently for greater expenditure on this head that the claims were amply rewarded by the maximum being given.

### Part III.

#### LAST PUBLIC ACTIVITIES.

Ever thoughtful for the general welfare of his community, the tireless politician brought in a popular resolution, which the Government accepted, substituting Friday for Sunday as holiday in all Government, Municipal, and local Board Mohammedan schools, thereby removing impediments from the paths of Muslim students, facilitating their demands both for their religion and their education.

At the same session of the legislature, he strongly upbraided the Government for their dilatoriness in allowing the important measure recommended by the committee on Mohammedan education to lie on the shelf for more than four years, though the measures themselves had been accepted by Government, and his stirring speech drew from the Minister in charge not only a confession of considerable delay but also an assurance that "a serious effort would be made to remedy the fault immediately." It was at this session also that the Hon. Mr. Jaffer received from the President of the Council a remarkable tribute demonstrating his willingness not only to compromise but also to give credit where credit is due. This is the tribute paid by His Excellency Lord Willingdon:—"I can only say to the Honourable Member that I am sure the Government and the director of Public Instruction are deeply grateful to him for his very generous appreciation of Government's action, and I am bound to say we are rather unaccustomed to hear non-official Honourable Members." Commendation such as this given to a member who had been so persistent and importunate in his demands on Government, reveals how highly his services were thought of by the very Government on whose educational side he was such a thorn.



### IN THE IMPERIAL COUNCIL.

From Mr. Jaffer's speech when he entered a higher sphere of political action in the Imperial Council in 1919. These were enlarged, his success as a speaker and persuader making him a popular choice for the exposure of wrongs and the redress of wrongs. But in all his activities he always had a ready tongue for the community's needs, particularly along educational lines, and it was not surprising that one of his first moves should be a resolution calling for a full and impartial enquiry by the Central Government into the response made by all the Provincial Governments to the suggestions and recommendations of the Government of India regarding the extension and improvement of Muslim education during the preceding seven years. His speech on that occasion was a mass of repier thrusts at the inefficiency and lack of the various governments, and he then fell into the trap by his shrewd suggestion that there was an obligation on the part of the Government of India to see their recommendations carried out.

Perhaps the only other activity in educational matters which should be incorporated in this brief biography is the part the Hon. Mr. Jaffer played in the passing of the Aligarh University Bill. Although generally giving his support to the Bill as brought forward by Government he did not hesitate to point out the ways in which it might detrimentally affect his community and to suggest amendments designed to remove these pitfalls. All of these amendments were passed, but it is important to note that certain mistakes which have occurred during the past few years have shown how much better it would have been had Mr. Jaffer's far-seeing suggestion been adopted. And his personal influence as a member of the Aligarh University Council has in no small measure given assistance along these lines he originally suggested.

It is difficult in the case of a politician with such a host of activities to mention any particular endeavour for special mention, and yet this section of a chapter dealing with the Hon. Mr. Jaffer's work for the community would be complete without an account of his Cutchi Memons Bill and his successful efforts to improve the condition under which the Haj pilgrims left India.

### THE CUTCHI MEMONS BILL.

That the passage of the Cutchi Memons Bill through the Imperial Council was no easy task is shown by an extract from the supporting speech of Mr. C. A. Kincaid, a Government official, who was surprisingly unstinting in his praise. He said "I wish on behalf of the Presidency of Bombay and on my own behalf to thank the Honourable Mover and to congratulate him on the skill and success with which he has piloted this bill to this advanced stage. The bill is not exactly what the Honourable Mover wished, or what the community wished, and I think it speaks volumes for the skill and patience the Honourable Member that he should have convinced his community as to the wisdom of accepting the Bill as it now stands. Indeed in accepting it I think that they showed good sense, good will, a reasonableness, and a readiness to co-operate with Government. Other persons in other parts of India would do well to take as a model for their own conduct."

Even the Hon. Mr. William Vincent was forced to pay tribute to the Mover:— "I congratulate the Honourable Member on the successful termination of his efforts to secure this change in the law. I think it only fair to say that had it not been for the perseverance the Bill would not have been passed into law this session. Had it not been introduced it I thought it would be impossible to get it before the Imperial Council came into operation. It was so easy for Government to postpone it until some future

opinion was ~~fully~~ represented. The Hon. Member was very insistent, ~~and~~ there were ~~times~~ when I was so ~~much~~ occupied with other ~~business~~ that I have listened to his eloquent advocacy of the Bill ~~with~~ with a sinking of the heart." It is not to be wondered at therefore, that as the Bill was being passed, one grateful Member of the House exclaimed: "I have no ~~doubt~~ that the name of the Hon. Mr. Jaffer will for ever be remembered by the ~~Indian~~ Memons Community."

And rightly so, for in ~~the~~ realising one of the life's ambition the Hon. Mr. ~~Jaffer~~ secured for the community ~~an~~ ~~removal~~ by which the anomaly of their being governed by the Hindu Law of inheritance and ~~customs~~ was removed, and the injustice of many generations ~~abolished~~. And how did he work this miracle? Only by insistence and publicity, for the Hon. Sir William Vincent declared during the ~~debate~~ that non-official members ~~had~~ "never before had ~~such~~ ~~valuable~~ information placed before them with such authority." Thoroughness of ~~work~~ has always marked the politics of Mr. Jaffer and hence his unvarying success ~~even~~ against opposition.

### HELPING THE HAJIS

In endeavouring to ameliorate the ~~lot~~ of the Hajis, the ~~same~~ politician adopted a different ~~method~~. Having by judicious questioning in the legislature obtained knowledge of Government's share and responsibility, in 1900 he tabled a resolution calling for a committee of enquiry into the ~~Hajis~~ grievances. ~~But~~ ~~even~~ ~~that~~ he did not let the grass grow under his feet. He had informal talks with the ~~Minister~~ in charge ostensibly to sound the views of Government, and on being ~~assured~~ that the Minister in Charge would personally visit Bombay to investigate the Hajis grievances he withdrew his ~~resolution~~ recognising that more ~~direct~~ and ~~practical~~ action could be taken by the responsible

official of Government than by a slow committee. As a result of his activity, the conditions of the Hajis both during embarkation and disembarkation and during travel were distinctly improved.

### Helping all communities

It might have been concluded from the foregoing that the political activities of the Hon. Sir Ebrahim Jaffer were restricted to the interests of his own community, but far from it. True, he was a firm believer in each community possessing staunch and fearless representatives, having in the Imperial Legislative Council (in February 1920) warmly defended communal representation as "one of our hard earned rights," but he was nevertheless very solicitous for the rights of others. To illustrate this, a rapid survey of his many speeches in the Bombay Council and the Imperial Council show that he definitely associated himself with Cantonment grievances, local self-government, indigenous industries, Ayurvedic medicinal research, the influenza epidemic, conditions of factory labour, cinema censorship, the conditions of postal workers, and Indian coinage. No opportunity was missed in bringing forward the needs of the varying classes and communities, although perhaps he is best known (next to his educational activities) as the champion of the residents in the Cantonments, his work for which, however, forms a separate section of this review.

Without going into details in connection with his other activities, brief reference may be made of a few of them. As it is impossible to sort them out into their order of importance, perhaps their best place will be to make a hurried trip through the years and follow in Sir Ebrahim's foot-steps as he marches through successive Councils commenting briefly on the more prominent of his general activities therein.

In the Bombay Council of 1916 he strongly supported the Government Bill to amend the Municipal and Local Acts to give greater punishment for corrupt and illegal election practices which had by that time become so rampant as to be "a scandal in any civilised society." Indeed, he took the lead stand taken by Sir Ebrahim in exposing some of these practices to great concern and anxiety to the Council which resulted in Government bringing forward the new Bill, yet even then, despite his own sad experience, he urged that an additional Court of appeal be provided for alleged delinquents.

In 1918 we find him moving a resolution calling for the establishment of a pharmacological research institution for experiment with indigenous drugs. The idea received unanimous support from all parties, the Surgeon-General in particular being especially enthusiastic over the scheme and it was carried unanimously.

In the same year he was successful in getting a resolution passed which vitally affected the whole of the younger generation of the Presidency, calling for a full enquiry by Government into the effects of the many restrictions imposed on the admission of students into secondary schools. And once again the results of his agitation amply justified his expenditure of time.

During the devastating influenza epidemic of 1918, Sir Ebrahim urged upon the Government the necessity of a full enquiry by experts into the causes, nature, and remedies of the sickness, and as a result of the Government Bombay Council asked the Government of India to conduct a full enquiry into the matter.

Passing by several other matters of lesser importance, we come to the important subject in 1920 of the reduction of the pound sterling from Rs. 15 to Rs. 10,

Ebrahim Jaffer was one of the members who urged such a vital subject be very carefully investigated and passed through the House in a few hours, and he maintained that the exchange conditions were far too abnormal and excessive to justify any sort of currency legislation. Similarly when a resolution came under discussion on the need for an enquiry into industrial finance and the establishment of industrial banks, the business side of Sir Ebrahim Jaffer manifested itself and in a brief but very telling speech he showed that industries in India required the encouragement and support of the State if the rapid economic development of the country was to be brought about.

### Working for Cantonment People

But it must be admitted that by far the most important of his non-educational activities was his fight for the rights and privileges of residents in the Cantonments. Living under strict military rule, the property owners had no political stalwart to plead their case or to demand redress for the wrongs committed against them. With his usual zeal, talent, and persistence, the Poona politician became champion of their cause, and started off by asking questions in the Imperial Legislative Council which speedily showed the military authorities that they would have to stop needlessly treading on the toes of the civilians. Not that he was bigoted anti-cantonment-walls, but rather that the good of the whole community was his special aim. In fact in 1918 we find him pleading for assistance from Government for the Poona Cantonment committees, urging that all primary schools conducted by these Committees, be placed upon the same footing as those run by other committees with regard to grants-in-aid and other facilities, and his point was well

so clearly ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ was accepted by Government.

For several years Sir ~~the~~ took ~~the~~ in the activities of the All-India Cantonments Association, and he did excellent service in a dozen different directions, including membership of ~~the~~ Government's Cantonments Reforms Committee. His real opportunity however, came when the Government of India introduced their Cantonment House Accommodation Amendment Bill, of the select committee of which ~~he~~ was made a member, an appointment which in itself was nothing but ~~an~~ acknowledgment of the excellent work he had been doing in that direction. Indeed, ~~in~~ with another Bill, it ~~was~~ safely ~~to~~ said that it owed its existence almost wholly to the persistent agitation on the part of Sir Ebrahim Jaffer against the grievances the ~~Bill~~ was removing. His speech on ~~the~~ completed Bill was another illustration of his fearlessness and tact, for while ~~he~~ proclaimed its essential incompleteness and defectiveness ~~on~~ the other hand, he freely thanked Government ~~on~~ the other hand for ~~the~~ few crumbs of comfort ~~that~~ had been thrown to house ~~owners~~ in the Cantonments. Had it not been for the unflinching persistence ~~of~~ Sir Ebrahim Jaffer, General Sir Charles Munro, in replying to the First Cantonment deputation ~~was~~ made, would ~~never~~ have ~~been~~ in 1920,—“I agree with you that ~~the~~ present Cantonment Law, which was made half a century back, has outlived ~~its~~ need. It requires thorough overhauling ~~and~~ change.” And ~~the~~ ~~the~~ Bill, which Sir ~~the~~ hopefully described as “~~the~~ ~~first~~ fragment of Cantonment Legislation,” ~~was~~ passed, ~~the~~ Excellency ~~the~~ Commander-in-Chief admitted that ~~it~~ was ~~made~~ in order “to help owners ~~and~~ ~~to~~ improve ~~the~~ law which undoubtedly ~~was~~ ~~the~~ past unsatisfactory ~~and~~ required amendment.”

Then when in 1924 the Bill consolidated and amended the law relating to the administration of cantonments, His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief freely stated in the Council of India that the question of reforming the system of Cantonment administration was brought into prominence by the efforts of an association in the work of which "my Hon. friend Khan Bahadur Ebrahim Jaffer, a member of the Council, has always taken an important part." In his speech moving the Bill, Lord Rawlinson admitted the great need for a change and in a large measure accepted the arguments which the All India Cantonments Association, headed by Sir Ebrahim, had been putting forward for years.

Grateful though I was for the honest attempt to improve the conditions of people living in the cantonments, the Poona enthusiast was not to be hawdinked into a belief that the Bill was perfect. In his speech on that occasion, he crossed swords with His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief on several points, and demonstrated in the clearest of ways that although introduced ostensibly to introduce into Cantonment administration the spirit of the Reforms, some of the "improvements" suggested were actually retrograde proposals by no means consistent either with the spirit of the Reforms or with the ideals of British justice.

His Excellency's prominence had been given to these retrograde steps in the Presidential address made by Sir Ebrahim at the third session of the All-India Cantonments Conference at Meerut in 1922, his speech being a wise mixture of compromise, and firmness. He freely admitted that the Bill was a first step towards liberalising the administration and that it should be judged in that light, it being the first step in the history of Cantonments that an attempt had been made to introduce an



element of popular representation but on the other hand he maintained that on several points the Bill had introduced a halting and grudging advance. Yet even in saying this, Sir Ebrahim showed considerable restraint. To use his own words: "The task of a peoples representative is not an easy one. If we are to differ on every point from our fellow colleagues on the committee, the very object of forming such a committee would be defeated. In such a case it would have had much the same effect if we had each submitted his views separately to the Government. The value of a committee lies in the discussion that takes place at its sittings and the regard and consideration that have to be shown to the views of those who differ from us in a spirit of fairness. It was with this desire for a compromise, without allowing it to jeopardise our vital interests, that I participated in the proceedings of the Committee.

It was obvious that all the changes desired by the Cantonment Association could not be adopted at once and even in the Bill that it would at least do some good in the direction desired he would not expect the immediate passage. And this is the democratic way he explained his course. "I realise that no movement is perfect when it is first made. Any shortcomings it has and that may come to light, in the actual working, are remedied by a future amending Bill. It is in this hope that I request the House, Sir, to consider and pass the Bill without any amendment. Sir, I know the feelings of my fellow residents of the Cantonments who have kindly reposed confidence in me in this matter. They conferred upon me the great honour of electing me as the President of their District in the March session when the Cantonment Reform was first introduced and deliberated upon, in all its executive details. With the same feeling they so generously

place) in me I am in a position to say that they desire the Bill to become law immediately and not be subject to any further delay by trying to get its defects remedied by moving amendments. I yield to this popular desire and I hope Sir, that this Council will extend a similar regard to the wishes of the Cantonment people in this connection and pass the Bill in its existing form.

And this brief summary of his work for the Cantonments of India may be closed without quoting his great faith in the future as expressed in the last paragraph of his Presidential address at Meerut.

"I am not a pessimist. I have a great faith in British statesmanship. I have never found it wanting when it is applied with a will and a zeal. I am sure that the present dismal outlook in the country will give place ere long to one of brightness and hope and we, the lesser beings in the Cantonments of India, will find a ray of new light in the coming Reforms which I am sure will, in the hands of Government, take a shape that will then be readily acceptable to us."

### In the Council of State

To attempt to deal with all Sir Ebrahim's recent activities would in itself be a very great task. All manner of important questions have occupied his attention. In the Council of State, he has established a reputation for work which would be hard to beat whilst in Poona he ungrudgingly gave of his time in public service. The 1904 Presidency Agricultural Show at Poona-the greatest ever held in Asia-readily appealed to him and for his work done in 1904 he received the special thanks of the Government of Bombay.

At the same time he was also endeavouring to put on a sure footing the Bombay Presidency Muslim

tional Conference in which he was the secretary and as a result of his work district Conferences were held in 1926 and 1927 in the Kōkan, the Karnatak, and other parts of the Presidency. He speedily saw that this widespread enthusiasm would be of little avail without adequate funds and hence it was not a surprise to those who know him to read the following prominent article in the *Times of India* of January 20th 1927:—

"A considerable stir will doubtless be caused in the Muslim world by the appeal which is being issued by the General Secretary of the Bombay Presidency Muslim Educational Conference for the immediate establishment of a large fund to promote the cause of Muslim education, carrying out the idea so forcibly expressed by him at the last session of the Conference that it was time the conference should decide in their oft-repeated words that they were the best in promoting education amongst their co-religionists. In this appeal, the Hon. Sir Ebrahim Jaffer first summarises the past record of the Conference and the general support which its work had received from all influential Moslems, and even from the different Governors of the Presidency. As a result of this combined effort there had been a very satisfactory increase in the number of Mohamedan pupils receiving instruction throughout the Presidency. At the last Conference the Excellency Sir James Wilson urged upon the Conference leaders particularly to arrange for "the provision of funds on as generous a scale as the community was at some sacrifice, afford".

The General Secretary says in the course of his appeal:—"The work which the Conference is already doing requires to be properly financed. For this it must be placed on a permanent footing as has been done in the case of the All-India Muslim Educational

Conference. The donation of our Conference of Rs. 15,000/- by H. H. the Mir of Khairpur provided a suitable nucleus, but it requires to be developed. The annual expenditure incurred by the Conference in the varied work which it carries on, amounts to at least one lakh and until the income is increased any progress or even a continuance of this work, is impossible. I have, therefore, to appeal to all Muslim to strengthen the hands of the General Secretary, and I especially request the merchant princes of the Presidency and all Muslims to help forward the public work of the education of Muslims. I particularly draw the attention of this appeal to the holders of Trust Funds".

"This is the first definite attempt that has been made to establish a really adequate Muslim Educational Fund, and if it is successful should go a long way towards translating the talk of many years into achievement."

### RECENT LEGISLATIVE WORK.

There should perhaps now be summarised very briefly a few of the miscellaneous problems tackled by Sir Ebrahim in the Legislatures since he first entered them, apart from his educational activities.

*Indigenous Medicines*.—Thanks to his resolution a committee was appointed in 1918 to recommend what steps should be taken to start a pharmacological laboratory or research institute in medicine for scientific experiment with research into indigenous drugs. In moving the resolution Sir Ebrahim pointed out that thousands of drugs were being used daily by Indian practitioners all over India but that if indigenous drugs were to be scientifically investigated and experimented with and their properties definitely assessed, drugs which were undoubtedly have a great value could be placed on

market at a comparatively cheap rate. He also believed that such an investigation might open up a new and profitable industry in the country as well as largely assisting in stamping out the quackery which was so rampant. The resolution was cordially supported by the whole medical profession and by the Surgeon-General with the result that the Government hesitated in accepting it said: "Even if I wished to oppose it I should find great difficulty in doing so in the face of the opinions that have been expressed by our own experts in the matter".

*Influenza Epidemic:*—Towards the end of 1918 when the influenza epidemic was exacting a terrific toll from India, Sir Ebrahim moved a resolution in the Bombay Council which undoubtedly awakened the Presidency to a realisation that they were faced with a dire calamity and so he urged that instead of leaving the matter to the leisurely research of experts, a committee be appointed by the Government of India to make full and immediate enquiries into the origin, nature, and treatment of the dread disease. This resolution also was received with much favour by the medical profession and by the Surgeon-General with the result that it was unanimously passed. Just how great a debt of gratitude the people of this Presidency owe Sir Ebrahim for getting that resolution passed will never be known.

*Stabilising Banking:*—One of the most important resolutions was that moved in March, 1926, and passed later on in the same year, asking Government to make an enquiry into the question of legislating with a view to place Indian banking on a sound footing. Sir Ebrahim introduced his subject with a speech that was as much a piece of logic as it was literature, demonstrating that he

neither asked for the moon nor expected miracles from Government. He said :—

"I wish to make it clear at the very outset that I have no delusions as to the beneficent possibilities of Government interference in such matters as the growth of sound banking, which depends more on efficient management, integrity and mutual confidence. Founded on credit and trust, banking can receive little assistance from the rigid provisions of law enacted for the regulation of its operations, and is best allowed to develop in an atmosphere of freedom, of a proper appreciation of its advantages and an honest effort to secure them. If I therefore, propose an enquiry as to the desirability of banking legislation, I do so mainly with a view to securing the removal of obstacles and the creation of favourable conditions for the healthy progress of banking in India. It is recognised on all hands that modern banking is yet in the early stage of its development in this country, and that everything that the State can do to facilitate its expansion and improvement, without undue interference, is to be welcomed. The present appears to me to be an opportune moment for an enquiry into this question, as we are fast approaching the restoration of normal conditions in our financial and industrial life. A discussion of this subject promises to be fruitful."

In speaking of the resolution, the Hon. Mr. A. G. McWaters, Secretary of the Finance Department, said:—"The question, or series of questions, which are raised by the resolution are second to none in importance among those which confront the country to-day, and I am sorry that we have not with us to-day the Hon. Mr. Phiroze Sethna".

When after a postponement, the Hon. Mr. Phiroze Sethna did appear on the stage, he made a lengthy speech

supporting the resolution, ~~which~~ was carried unanimously.

**Financial Measure Interest.**—In the Council of State in February 1907 Mr. Ebrahim ~~Ali~~ moved the steps to be taken to make available for the improvement and expansion of Muslim education all interest accruing from deposit and postal savings banks and Government securities belonging to Mussalmans who do not owing religious scruples receive interest therefrom, and the arrangement to be given immediate effect in provinces, in which Muslim public opinion is agreeable to the scheme.

The ~~member~~ pointed out the summary of opinions of provincial and other minor Governments forwarded to the Government of India on the subject showed that the majority of Muslims consulted in favour of the formation of a fund for the purpose he had suggested and the majority considered that serious religious susceptibilities of the community would be offended. The majority of local governments also did not raise any objection to the scheme. There was a slight opposition to the proposal on the part of a minority and for this reason he had moved in his resolution that the scheme be put into immediate operation only in provinces where there was no special opposition.

Mr. Brayne could not accept the resolution although Government had no desire to avoid the obligation. Constitutionally the Government of India's money could not be spent on a provincial ~~financial~~ subject. A stronger objection was that there might be some Mahomedans who would refuse to receive money for education from a source which was ~~haram~~.

Mr. Brayne did not reply to the ~~objection~~. The motion was ~~unanimously~~ carried, ~~unanimously~~ and challenging a division.

In the same session Sir Feroze moved some other resolutions of a national character, some of which were adopted.

*Control of Medicinal Drugs:*—In urging all provinces to control the traffic in medicinal drugs by legislation for the standardisation of the preparation and sale of such drugs, Sir Ebrahim made a powerful speech in which he indicated those responsible for a very dangerous situation in the drug trade. He quoted from the discussion at the last Science Congress that there was a tendency among practitioners to overdose their patients with drugs which meant that an enormous amount of money was wasted in medicines. He did not intend to interfere directly with provincial control over ordinary narcotic drugs such as opium, because he realised it was a matter connected with the excise revenue and also that excise policy was under the Transferred Department. There should, however, be absolutely no difficulty in seeing that drugs and drug preparations manufactured in the country were subject to Government control so that the quality of the preparation was at least up to the standard laid down in the pharmacopoeia. All over the world there was human misery and suffering due to the indiscriminate use of drugs ostensibly as medicines but actually as narcotics and intoxicants. He, therefore, declared that a fight must be waged against the threatened dangers to the people of the country.

*Tuberculosis:*—In the course of his speech at the same session urging that a conference should be called to discuss the question of the provision of tuberculosis hospitals, sanatoria and institutions for training practitioners in tuberculosis treatment throughout India. Sir Ebrahim Jaffer said:—I feel I must call the immediate attention of this House and the general public to the menace with which we are faced by the great white plague against which we



have as yet for some reason or other never pitted our real strength. The figures that I shall quote, erring perhaps on the conservative side, will probably astound every member of this House. A modest calculation puts the number of consumptives in India at sixty lakhs, a total which provides an annual death-roll from this disease of twenty lakhs. The estimate is that one lakh per cent of the population is infected with pulmonary tuberculosis, meaning a total of thirty lakhs suffering from the phase of the disease, with another thirty lakhs ailing with non-pulmonary consumption. Moreover, the official and non-official enquiries all over India have elicited the information that during the past twenty years there has been a noticeable progressive increase in the extent of infection by about 50 per cent over the previous figures. And what is the position regarding relieving the distress of this vast army of consumptives. According to official figures, there are barely one hundred beds in sanatoria to accommodate these sixty lakhs of consumptives, whilst even with the chain of hospitals and dispensaries, the average annual total of patients treated, indoors and outdoors, for respiratory diseases is less than one and a half lakhs out of the sixty lakhs who need treatment.

In view of what I have already said in the House, I think it will be agreed that the great task can only be tackled by a central organization, working with, or perhaps composed of representatives of the different Provincial Governments. The exact composition of such a central body and the detailed functions can be decided after this House has accepted the principle of my resolution, but I desire to have it definitely agreed that immediate action of a comprehensive character is necessary. In short, the first step of this programme will be first to outline a practical scheme, then to launch it,

and finally to arrange for a central organisation to control and co-ordinate the work worked out. As for the scheme to be started by the Central Board I propose that it should first consider the establishment of a chain of hospitals, dispensaries, or clinics, around India to give free treatment to all desiring it. I do not propose that these hospitals should be of an elaborate character, but should take the form of the dispensaries now established in many districts by municipalities and district local boards. It might be possible to combine the operations of these dispensaries with the work suggested in the combating of consumption.

Regarding sanatoria, I believe there should be some of these useful institutions, although I feel that the expense involved would rather recommend an earnest endeavour to get private philanthropists to undertake this phase of the task. It might be possible to arrange for such institutions to pay their way when they were established, and it seems to me that in such a country as India, where luxury in housing accommodation is not the rule but the exception, the establishment of a number of simple but useful sanatoria would not be an expensive task as appears on the face of the proposition.

The last part of my resolution calls for a series of institutions for training workers in dealing with the great white plague. This I admit will be the last phase of the organisation of any kind for, as I have already pointed out the preliminary work can be successfully carried out with minimal additions to the existing system of dispensary services and hospital facilities. Of course, if a small nation is to be able to stamp out this fatal disease, it will in the future be necessary to have an army of trained workers and I look forward to the time when such an army is available. But we would never start the first time being we shall have to protect ourselves with a strong attack

with the resources at present available, ultimately using the existing dispensaries as jumping-off places for the establishment of larger institutions in which village workers can be trained, I would now ask, even despite the urgency of the subject, that we should expect to have corps of highly-trained experts on tuberculosis to carry out this work, for I know that in such cases we must demand and establish a system of workers. A body of workers who know the principle of the disease, who know how to administer the treatment, and who would be successful in explaining the preventive measures to be adopted are the workers that are needed, and I feel that such a body could easily and speedily be trained once the general scheme of operation was started by the Central Body".

In commenting upon the resolution the "Evening News of India" said:—"Recent enquiries by official and non-official agencies have shown that there has been a progressive increase in the number of people suffering from tuberculosis. The time has definitely arrived when a co-ordinated effort must be made to grapple with the disease. This can only be done by a central organisation working with, and composed of, the different Provincial Governments. What Mr. Jaffer aims at in his resolution is the formation of such a central organization. The first preliminary step is the summoning of a Conference as suggested in the resolution. This Conference, with the necessary expert advice must first of all make a practical scheme to fight the white plague then suggest how it should be financed, and finally arrange for a central organization to control and coordinate the work."

## Part IV.

## Working

Perhaps we should now turn a little nearer home to Ebrahim's activities along the lines of local self-Government. It may safely be said about the City Municipality and the Poona School Board. He was a member of the former body for a number of years and chairman of the latter, and it must be admitted that his chairmanship was not only most successful but was also a much coveted honour for Mohammedan in a city like Poona which is such a stronghold of Brahminism. Indeed he was the first Mohammedan to attain that position.

He was nominated as a Municipal Councillor by the Government of Bombay in 1906 to fill the gap left by the great statesman, the Hon G. K. Gokhale. He quickly showed his capacities and within a few months became a member of the Managing Committee and later of the Sanitary Committee where he made his presence felt with a vengeance.

Even as an ordinary member of the Municipality, Sir Ebrahim was responsible for a number of educational improvements which although minor in themselves, gave a strong indication of his activity, enthusiasm, and future success. His ceaseless anxiety for the educational progress of his community quickly won its inspirational effect on the minds of other communities, and as a result Poona jumped into the forefront as a progressive town in all educational matters. The following is a skeleton outline of the improvements made whilst he was Municipal Councillor and Chairman of the School Board from 1912—1915.

1. His commodious sanitary houses, provided for the Urdu School.

2. An additional school for Mohammedan girls was opened and made permanent.

3. An additional school for Mohammedan boys was opened in a central locality and was made permanent.

4. Extra night schools for the poor Mohammedan boys were started in [redacted] Park.

5. An English [redacted] was added to No. 10 Urdu boys school as to [redacted] Mohammedan boys English. This [redacted] became very popular, and the Director of Public Instruction [redacted] it as an experiment for three years and to [redacted] make permanent after that period.

6. A Mohammedan teacher was sent to the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute in Bombay at the expense of the Municipality and returned qualified to teach scientific weaving.

7. A weaving class for the benefit of the [redacted] community, under this qualified Mohammedan [redacted] trained in Bombay was [redacted] working satisfactorily.

8. Seven more trained Mohammedan teachers [redacted] to the teaching staff. A scheme [redacted] placed before the Municipality to give scholarships to [redacted] school boys and to train them for this purpose.

9. One Mohammedan school was made a free [redacted] in consideration of the poverty of the Mohammedan in that quarter.

10. [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] reduced by [redacted] [redacted] in all schools.

11. Special attention was paid to [redacted] education of Mohammedan girls. Three Mohammedan girls have been [redacted] scholarships to enable them to attend the Female Training College. When qualified they were appointed as mistresses. This [redacted] [redacted] occasion [redacted] [redacted] this had [redacted] done.

12. Special attention was paid to drill gymnastics, [redacted] Arabic teaching.

13. An annual Municipal grant of Rs. 150/- was ~~sanctioned~~ and given to the ~~Public~~ School ~~by~~ the ~~Urban~~ Community.

14. An annual Municipal grant of Rs. 50/- was ~~sanctioned~~ and given to the Vetal peth Islam Library.

15. Local School Committees, the members of which were ~~selected~~ from the leading Mohamedans in the localities concerned, were formed for the purpose of supervising Urdu Schools within their respective localities.

16. The number of Mohamedan pupils increased from ~~100~~ to about 800.

17. A proposal was sanctioned by the School Board to appoint a ~~superintendent~~ superintendent or super ~~Master~~ to supervise the Urdu Schools.

It is especially interesting to ~~note~~ that all the above improvements were effected without demanding any increase in the grant previously made by the Municipal Council, a feat which incidentally shows the business ~~acumen~~ of the distinguished leader. As much credit is due for that ~~to~~ for the fact that his activity quickly placed Mohamedan schools on an equal footing with Hindu Schools in Poona.

At the same time as he was doing this excellent service, the indefatigable worker was Honorary Magistrate (and later chairman of the bench) and a member of the following special Committees—

The Poona Plague ~~Committee~~ Committee (During Plague)

The Poona Plague Committee for the City Municipality.

The King Edwards Memorial Fund Committee.

The Cantonment Coronation Committee.

The Ahmednagar ~~Committee~~ ~~Committee~~ Committee as Honorary Secretary.

The ~~Committee~~ ~~Committee~~ Committee as Honorary Secretary.

He was also serving on the following charitable Committees at Poona:—

- The Poona Juma Masjid as a Trustee.
- The Poona Islamic Board (for boys and girls) Managing Trustee and Treasurer.
- The Poona Anjuman (as a Trustee).
- The Sorabji Padamjee Dispensary.
- The Countess of Darnley Fund (Poona Branch).
- The Society for the protection of children.
- The Poona Temperance Association.
- The Nutan Marathi Vidyalaya (as a Fellow).
- The St. John's Ambulance Association (as a life Member).

The Bombay Presidency Mohamedan Educational Conference (as Treasurer and General Secretary).

The Bombay Presidency Moslem League (as a Treasurer).

### Communal Representation Logic.

Sir Ebrahim's views on Communal Representation in the local Municipalities were fully pronounced, although that must not be interpreted as meaning that they were tactless, vindictive, or narrow. By personal experience he found that the Mohamedans look after themselves. When in 1918 the question of Communal representation in municipalities by separate electorates was brought before the Legislative Council of Bombay, Sir Ebrahim made a remarkably cogent and well-balanced speech which is well worth quoting as a model of tactfulness, firmness and logic. He said:—"I should have very much liked to get the discussion of the question raised in the resolution before the Council postponed to a more suitable time. The whole subject of constitutional reforms is now being universally agitated and Muslim representation by separate electorates is one among the

several important points are engaging the attention of the people Government. The recommendations in this respect the Local Self-Government Committee which I had the honour to work are likewise before Government and I doubt not, under discussion. A specific proposal like the one embodied in the resolution would, under the circumstances, appear to be inopportune. As the question, has, however, been actually raised, I feel my duty to express my views thereon and to lend my support to the principle of the resolution. I can refrain from observing that in a way my honourable friend is right in pressing for the acceptance of his proposal with regard to Mohammedan representation in municipalities. There are who uncompromising opponents of all separate electorates, but at this time of the day, they need not be taken seriously at all. There are, however, who admit the necessity of giving special representation to Mohammedans but they would do this through mixed electorates. And it is essential that the Moslem view on this matter should be clearly put forth so that there should be no misunderstanding about it.

"Now, I had myself moved a resolution in this Council some time ago asking for the special representation of Mohamedans on the Poona City Municipality and I know the disabilities under which Mohamedans have to labour in the absence of their proper representation in Municipalities and local bodies. I have long tried in vain to get redress for this serious Mohamedan grievance in Poona. I am convinced that nothing short of communal representation by separate electorates will solve the problem. On this morning the results of the ward elections in Poona City have been declared and it is pertinent to say that in spite of all efforts made in the behalf of the Mohamedan Community would not a single Mohamedan



member. This has happened continuously during the past 24 years. I am anxious that my attitude and that of those who think with me, should not be misunderstood by my non-Mohamedan friends, we do not wish in any way to mar the harmony that is necessary among the various communities of India in its march towards self-government, and sincerely wish to do everything in our power to promote a large national unity, but I request my friends with all the authority I can command to look facts in the face and to realise the keenness and the determination of the Mohamedan community to secure special representation. We feel that our progress—which means also the general progress of the country—is bound up with the concession of the demand of communal representation and nothing will be gained and a good deal will be lost by opposition to this demand. I would go further and say that national progress would be hampered if the wishes of the Mohamedan community are not met. The principle has been always conceded in the constitution of the Councils and there should be no hesitation in taking the natural and logical step of extending it to municipalities and local bodies.

“This is not only an empty sentiment; there are substantial and practical reasons behind the demand. There are a number of questions among those the municipalities have to deal with which probably elected Mohamedan members alone can satisfactorily tackle. Questions like those of slaughterhouses, burial grounds, music in public streets and purdah cause a lot of friction between Hindus and Mohamedans and must be dealt with in a spirit of harmony and good-will. And I must emphasise that mixed committees will not be able to get the right kind of members on the municipalities. Mohamedan candidates will have always to look up to non-mohamedan

who will be in a majority and the members elected will represent a non-mohamedan constituency rather than the mohamedan community whose representatives they ought really to be. If the elected members and the non-mohamedan community will thus be placed in an extremely awkward position. Nomination of Mohamedan Members will give the representatives whom the community wants, and in some of municipalities having a right to elect two-thirds of the councillors it is impracticable. Mixed electorates will prove utterly unsatisfactory, as I have endeavoured to show, and we are reduced to the alternative which has been suggested in the resolution before the Council. I trust that honourable members will approach the question in a spirit of sympathy and a desire to understand the Moslem points of view and to conciliate Moslem feelings."

This very clearly shows character of the speaker and the manner in which he handled the most delicate subjects.

But his educational work did not stop with a successful administration of the Poona City School Board. For a number of years he cherished the idea of establishing a school in the Presidency based on the lines of the English public school, and in 1918 he made up his mind that the time was ripe for such a venture. Its novel character did not at first commend it to the general community, and so his great task was to enlist the sympathy and win the support of the rich merchants of Bombay. His silver tongue and his evident sincerity quickly loosened their purse-strings by convincing them of the soundness of the project, and so in 1919 the plans for his Public School crystallized into actuality. He obtained the cordial co-operation of Dr. Sir Abbas Ali Baig and other well known Muslims, and induced other

friends to build a commodious bungalow and equipment at Panchgani. Sir Ebrahim is not one who has to wait until he has all the work in his pocket before launching a scheme. Once he has satisfied himself as to the practicability and of the support forthcoming from his friends, he makes a start with whatever means are at his disposal. Who but he would have started the "public school" in a private house? Yet he did this. Only he could get the scheme started, it would very quickly show its usefulness and importance. The school was accordingly opened in its modest home in August 1912, and for some time it was his hand on the helm of affairs which steered it clear of shoals and rocks and storms. To encourage others he put his own name on the attendance roll. His faith and sacrifice were quickly rewarded, however, for after he had acted as secretary and treasurer for a few months, the school justified its inception to such a degree that some wealthy Bombay merchants came forward (inspired, of course, by Sir Ebrahim's persuasiveness) and donated sufficient money to enable to purchase 180 acres of land just outside Panchgani. The foundation stone of the permanent school was laid by His Excellency the Governor of Bombay, Sir Panchgani in May 1913 and this famous Darul-uloom is one of the brightest gems in Panchgani's sparkling crown of educational institutions. It is not been for the foresight and persistence of Sir Ebrahim Jaffer, Panchgani would have nurtured schools belonging to every important community and denomination except the Mohamedans.

## Part V.

## Honour for Ebrahim

Then came the reward. So quite and unostentatious had been his work that the Knighthood at the birthday honours in 1919 came as a great surprise to hundreds of his friends, although he was in high places. This great honour was not unexpected. He had been made a Khan Bahadur in 1919, but a grateful Government felt it their duty to show that no matter how relentless a critic a man may be he was entitled to the highest reward provided his criticism was just and constructive.

Letters and telegrams rained down upon the new Poona Knight, and numerous parties were held to congratulate him. The largest of these from the citizens of Poona was the greatest function of its kind ever held in the home-city of Sir Ebrahim and was attended by His Excellency Sir John Wilson. The following is the description of the function published in the "Times of India" of September 14, 1926:-

"No man has done more during the passed few years for the cause of Muslim education than the Hon. Sir Ebrahim Jaffer" said His Excellency the Governor this afternoon at the special party given by the citizens of Poona to Sir Ebrahim Jaffer in honour of his recent Knighthood. "His public work has shown him to be very worthy of this high honour and we were all highly delighted at such a representative gathering as this to express the appreciation of Poona. We will congratulate him heartily, for he has a very fine record of service." His Excellency said that he was particularly to pay tribute to the educational work done by Sir Ebrahim in the sphere of Muslim education, for he had shown intense zeal and energy in that connection. Because of

the great work he had done in that and other directions, that he (H. E.) was personally very glad to be present at the party in order to add his own congratulations to those of the Poona citizens and to wish the honoured guest a long lifetime to enjoy his distinction.

The chairman of the entertainment committee in his remarks, then paid a tribute to the interest which His Excellency the Governor took in all Poona affairs and of the honour he was paying the Hon. Sir Ebrahim Jaffer by being present at such a representative gathering, and the speaker then thanked His Excellency on behalf of Poona for having made a new knight of this town in the galaxy of Knights in the Presidency.

The Bombay Presidency Educational Conference in general and the Islamia school in Poona in particular, the speaker said, owed very much to the work of Sir Ebrahim Jaffer, and it was largely through his efforts that sound education had been brought within the reach of the poorest of the community. Sir Ebrahim then turned his remarks to wider spheres, and quickly made himself heard in the supreme councils of the country, and he is still a very active member of the Council of State and it must be further pointed out that the reforms brought about in Cantonment administration were due very largely to the guidance given by Sir Ebrahim to the movement.

In the course of his reply Sir Ebrahim Jaffer said he had done so very much for such a high honour. "It has always been my principal aim to co-operate with the Government and this co-operation leads to the advancement of the cause of the country, and I freely and frankly criticise such actions of the Govern-

as are, in my opinion, prejudicial to its interests, it is my conviction to continue to follow this principle in my public life for I believe this is the only sure way to the goal which we all have in view."

Amongst those present were Lt. General Sir Harold and Lady Walker, Sir Dinshaw and Lady Petit, Sir Hidayatullah, Mr. M. B. Chaubal, Mr. Chunilal and Lady Mehta, Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Hatch, and all the leading civil and military officials with the chief residents of Poona, totalling well over 700."

After a tribute from H. E. the Governor of Bombay no further action is recorded.

## Part VI.

### What of the Future ?

From the account of the different activities of Sir Ibrahim Jaffer which have been summarised in the foregoing pages, it will by this time have become very apparent that the whole of India was his sphere, and that no great problem frightened him from an attempt. In nearly all national questions his hand is noticeable, whilst in connection with the educational advancement of his own community, he had unremittingly sought to utilise existing sources, and to discover and tap new ones in the pursuit of his great aim. He even behind the curtain of public life has always been ready to assist in all spheres, and hundreds of his own community (and other communities) can testify to his wise counsel, his unfailing generosity, and his unlimited patience. His help has always been as unhesitatingly given as it has been unblushingly sought. The power of his influence has brought to bear on the most difficult and non-official in connection with the solving of some knotty

problems ~~about~~ some ~~money~~, cemetery, ~~or~~ tomb, ~~and~~ it ~~was~~ safely be ~~that~~ many a communal squabble ~~which~~ might have ended seriously has been settled by his ~~own~~ ~~reasoning~~ ~~and~~ persuasive arguments.

His valuable ~~work~~ during the period of the great War alone show the great ~~influence~~ of Ibrahim ~~within~~ ~~over~~ his community. Faced as he was with the stubborn fact ~~that~~ the ~~British~~ ~~army~~ had been ~~used~~ against the great champions of Islam, he nevertheless fought ~~and~~ the ~~issue~~ of justification with his own soul, and then ~~set~~ about the task of convincing his co-religionists ~~that~~ it was their duty to support the ~~British~~ Government. He did this by endeavouring ~~to~~ ~~show~~ a true conception ~~and~~ understanding of the real origin and aims of the war, and in this he ~~was~~ great ~~success~~.

Nor was he any less exacting in the great battle for their rights which his community has had to fight in India. Month after month from the public platform and legislative forum, he ~~has~~ demanded the citizens' privileges which Moslems can claim by birth, law, and power, although he always associated with his demands the clear-cut ~~statement~~ that they ~~must~~ always keep within the bounds of constitutionalism. Subject ~~to~~ that proviso he endeavoured to enthuse all his co-religionists with the idea that they must utilise every ~~means~~ for achieving their great object of making India a self-governing unit of a great Empire. To this ~~end~~ ~~he~~ he ~~never~~ ceased to expound his principle of deriving the maximum benefit from the existing system of administration, and ~~never~~ hesitating to withdraw if it was proved that he ~~was~~ in the wrong ~~or~~ to yield ~~to~~ a ~~promise~~ if by so doing he ~~could~~ at least gain something. His were ~~not~~ the tactics of a firebrand, ~~nor~~ was ~~he~~ the mentality of a non-co-operator. In fact, on general principles ~~he~~ ~~was~~ of the first ~~and~~ Responsivists-a member

of "the brigade" who responded to all the suggestions of the Government and thereby demonstrated that the operation always pays. He would never say that he never made any mistakes, for he himself is fully aware that he is far from faultless; but unlike many other politicians he neither refuses to open a conviction nor refrains from admitting his mistakes.

Poona has been the home of many reformers in various fields, not a few of them being renowned for their work in the realm of education; but standing foremost from all in future years will be the name of the Hon. Sir Ebrahim Jaffer, who is to-day one of the most respected citizens of the Pearl City of the Deccan. As a politician he is famed for his sober judgment and steady views, though an ardent and sincere Mohammedan he is not a fanatical religious reformer, his policy being to stand by the old doctrines rather than to introduce modernism into the faith, but as an educationalist he is entitled to be called a real pioneer of Mohammedanism in the Presidency, if not in the whole of India. The very life of this great man is the story of the rise and the renaissance of education for Muslims in India; for few men have done more for their community and for their race and for their country in this direction than he has. And the very fact that his activities were so much limited in a community which had so badly neglected that very line of work which would have meant progress and a realization of his ideals, adds importance to his pioneering work and luster to his name.

His movement, be it public or private, was aimed for the benefit of his countrymen and even before him was a thing but an enthusiastic supporter, and to make his life one of the public affairs of Poona and Bombay Presidency



government which would be as surprising  
deplorable.

Today he is as active as ever, being at the prime of his life and at the height of his enthusiasm for politics he still participates most successfully, & of a moderately and most keenly, whilst in all social & national matters he is in the forefront of the attacks being made upon vice, misery, crime and illiteracy. Than this work, no man could do better, and it seems plain that a still greater future lies ahead of him than behind him, for no man is more surely carving for himself a niche in corridors of Indian history in which to place the memory of some thing accomplished than Sir Ebrahim Jaffer of Poona.

A quarter of a century of public life has made of the young Poona merchant a level-headed statesman, honoured and respected by Government as much as by his own community; and bearing in mind the fact that he is now in his prime he may be expected to play a still greater part in the intense and important drama that will be enacted on India's stage in the next few years.

Poona,  
31st March 1937.

**The End.**





